

7th Station

Jesus falls to the ground a second time

Focus: Jesus endured tremendous suffering, in faithfulness and love for his Father and for us

Action: When I suffer, I will ask God for the grace to endure it without complaining, for love of Him



Leader

We adore you O Christ
and we praise you.

People

Because by your
holy cross, you have
redeemed the world.

Reflection

In Saint Paul's letter to the people of Philippi, he says: *"though he was in the form of God, (Jesus) did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross" (Phil 2: 6-8)*. Why? Why would God, the Almighty, the All-powerful, want to come to earth and experience poverty, rejection, suffering and death? The answer is simple, yet profound: because he loves us, and because, *"no one has greater love than this; to lay down one's life, for one's friends" (John 13-15)*.

It was Jesus love for us that enabled him to bear the cross upon his shoulder. In taking on our human nature, he exposed himself to all the limits of the human condition, and this seventh station, it was the limits of physical endurance. Imagine having a weight cast upon your shoulder that was at least equal to your own weight, and having to carry it uphill for a quarter mile after having been beaten mercilessly. Imagine what it took Jesus to lift himself up again with the cross on his shoulder after collapsing to the cold, hard ground, amidst abuse of the onlookers. That is what love did for us!

Prayer

Almighty Father, Jesus' physical endurance and his tolerance for pain and suffering is inconceivable. Forgive us for ever having complained about anything we've suffered in life. It's clear that our sorrows pale in comparison to what Jesus freely chose to undergo for love for us. This knowledge is humbling, yet at the same time it inspires us to want to change. In your mercy Father, grant us the desire and the grace to become more and more like Jesus every day. When we suffer, give us strength to bear it without complaining, in return for the unconditional love he demonstrated throughout his passion, and continues to show us each day. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.